

# LAKELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDUM | Q&A



## WHAT IS ON THE AUGUST 2, 2012, BALLOT?

In addition to a general election for several public offices, the August 2 ballot will include a referendum on whether the City of Lakeland should be authorized to create a municipal school district. Citizens will also vote on a proposed half-cent sales tax increase. Both referendum questions will be found at the end of the August 2 ballot. Please see the following page for the exact wording of the referendum questions.

## WHAT AUTHORITY WOULD A LAKELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE?

A Lakeland municipal school district would operate independently of any county or Memphis/Shelby County Schools System. A municipal school district would ensure local control of Lakeland public schools. It would establish the right of Lakeland citizens to elect a municipal board of education and to provide a superintendent for the Lakeland municipal public schools.

## CAN LAKELAND AFFORD TO START ITS OWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Yes. Tennessee laws require that taxes collected for schools must “follow the children.” The municipality’s public schools would receive at least the same state and county funding as the county’s schools in Lakeland currently receive. In fact, approximately 93% of the funding needed to operate a municipal school district comparable to our current system would come from county and state funds. The balance could be raised from the proposed half-cent sales tax increase and funds raised from a portion of Lakeland’s property tax revenue.

## WHAT DOES A “HALF-CENT SALES TAX INCREASE” MEAN?

The proposed sales tax increase is the equivalent of an additional nickel paid in local option sales tax for every \$10 spent on retail purchases in Lakeland. The current tax rate is 9.25%; with the proposed increase, the sales tax would be 9.75%. Citizens in Arlington, Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown and Millington will also vote on a half-cent sales tax increase for their municipalities on the August 2 ballot.

## WHY DOES LAKELAND NEED A SALES TAX INCREASE WHEN WE JUST INACTED A PROPERTY TAX?

The new City of Lakeland property tax rate effective this year is 85 cents per \$100 assessed value. Of that 85 cents, we have slated 60 cents for much-needed capital improvements (such as street repairs, traffic signals, drainage, etc.) and 25 cents for municipal schools, should the referendum pass. However, in order to create and maintain a quality school system comparable to what we currently have, we must also raise the local option sales tax to meet the City of Lakeland’s municipal school funding obligations.

## DOES THE CITY PLAN TO INCREASE THE SALES TAX AND RAISE PROPERTY TAXES AGAIN, TOO?

No. Under current conditions, if voters pass the half-cent sales tax increase on August 2, we do not expect to have to increase property taxes. We believe the funds raised from the sales tax increase, in addition to a portion of funds raised from Lakeland’s current property tax, would meet Lakeland’s financial obligation for funding municipal schools.

## IF THE SCHOOL REFERENDUM PASSES, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If the referendum passes, a Lakeland municipal school district would be formed. During the November 6 general election, citizens would elect a school board. Plans would be to have the municipal school district up and running for the 2013–2014 school year.

## IF THE SCHOOL REFERENDUM DOES NOT PASS, WHAT HAPPENS?

If the referendum does not pass, Lakeland schools would continue to be part of the Shelby County School System until the Memphis and Shelby County school districts merge to form a unified district in August 2013. The majority of the 13-member Memphis/Shelby County school board would live in the city of Memphis. This school board would be responsible for educating the children living in Lakeland.

## WHEN AND WHERE CAN I VOTE?

### July 16 to 28

### Early voting

Weekdays: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. | Saturdays: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Refuge Church

9817 Huff n Puff Road

Lakeland, TN

### August 2

### Official referendum vote

At your assigned voting precinct

7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information about where and how to vote, visit [www.shelbyvote.com](http://www.shelbyvote.com).

## IF A LAKELAND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IS CREATED, WHEN WILL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE?

### August 7

Potential Candidate Forum

6 p.m. at Bartlett Station Municipal Center (5868 Stage Road)

### August 16

Last day for candidates to file petitions to run for school board

### November 6

School board elections

## WHAT ARE THE REFERENDUM QUESTIONS?

Below are the referendum questions, exactly as they will appear on the August 2 ballot. You may vote “yes” or “no” to each of these questions.

*Shall the City of Lakeland be authorized to create a municipal school district that shall meet the standards of adequacy established by applicable State law and regulation, which standards include raising and spending each year the required amount of local funds for the operation of the municipal school district that, for calculation purposes only, would at least be equal to the amount that would be raised through a fifteen cents (\$.15) tax levy on each One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of taxable property for each year if all such taxes were collected?*

*Shall Lakeland Ordinance No. 12-167, which increases the municipality's sales tax from 2.25% to 2.75%, except where the sales tax rate is limited or modified by statute, be approved?*

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about the August 2 referendum, visit [www.lakelandtn.gov](http://www.lakelandtn.gov) or call (901) 867-2717 to speak with Robert Wherry, City Manager; or Thad Jablonski, Executive Coordinator. Also, follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/LakelandTN](https://facebook.com/LakelandTN)) and Twitter ([Lakelandschools](https://twitter.com/Lakelandschools)), or email us at [lakelandschools@lakelandtn.org](mailto:lakelandschools@lakelandtn.org).